**US private companies in agricultural research sector**

1820. SHRI R. KAMARAJ: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government had opened its public sector agriculture research to U.S. private companies;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that a joint declaration had been signed in this regard; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) to (d) A joint declaration between the Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India and United States Department of Agriculture has been signed on Indo-Us knowledge Initiative on Agriculture. The objective of the U.S.-India Knowledge Initiative on Agricultural Education, Research, Service and Commercial Linkages (the "Initiative") is to re-energize our partnership by promoting teaching, research, service and commercial linkages to address contemporary challenges. One of the features of this Initiative will be a public-private partnership where the private sector can help identify research areas that have the potential for rapid commercialization, with a view to develop new and commercially viable technologies for agricultural advancement in both countries.

**Development of pest-resistant rice**

1821. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Directorate of Rice Research and Hyderabad based Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology have jointly developed a new variety of pest-resistant rice called Sambha Masuri;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government would take steps for taking the results of this research to the door-steps of rice producing farmers in our country to curb the menace of destruction of rice production, through widely prevalent bacterial leaf blight;